

Comparing global and situational support for police use of force across immigrant generations
and native-born Americans

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines if global and situational support for police use of force varies across first-generation immigrants, second-generation immigrants and native-born Americans.

Design/methodology/approach: Drawing on data from the 2012 General Social Survey, multivariate logistic regression models are performed to predict each of the three binary outcome variables (e.g., support for police use of reasonable force or excessive force) depending on immigrant generation status.

Findings: Results indicate that, compared with native-born individuals, first-generation immigrants express less global support for police use of force and less support for police use of reasonable force. In contrast, the first-generation group is more supportive of police use of excessive force compared to the second-generation group and native-born group.

Originality/value: Much research on immigrants' perceptions of the police has yielded conflicting findings. Part of the reason has been attributed to failure to distinguish first-generation immigrants from successive generations of immigrants. The present study fills a gap in this line of research by assessing the extent to which there is a disparity in support for police use of force between different generations of immigrants and native-born individuals.

Keywords: immigrants, police use of force, policing, immigrant generation status

Introduction

Much research has been conducted to understand the correlates and consequences of perceptions of the police (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Decker, 1981; Tyler & Huo, 2002). While minority perceptions of the police have also been widely investigated (Peck, 2015), perceptions of the police among immigrants have been neglected with blacks and whites receiving the largest share of attention (Sun & Wu, 2018; Weitzer, 2014; Wu, Sun, & Cao, 2017). Additionally, assessing differences in perceptions of the police between first-generation immigrants, second-generation immigrants, and native-born individuals remains underdeveloped (Piquero, Bersani, Loughran, & Fagan, 2016). Considering that immigration policy, laws and the enforcement of the laws has been a critical issue historically in the United States (Menjívar & Bejarano, 2004; Rocha, Knoll, & Wrinkle, 2015), the limited knowledge base regarding differences in perceptions of police between different generations of immigrants as well as native-born individuals is puzzling.

The number of immigrants has been increasing since 1965 when the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 which abolished a national quota system and allowed Asians and Latin Americans to immigrate (Hagan & Palloni, 1999). Today, it is estimated that 43.7 million foreign-born immigrants are living in the United States, and the immigrant share of the U.S. population hit a historic high, accounting for 13.5% of people living in the U.S. (López, Bialik, & Radford, 2018). While Mexicans alone account for 26% of the U.S. immigration population, the number of immigrants from Asia (e.g., China and India) is rising at the fastest rate compared to other major racial or ethnic groups (Sun & Wu, 2018). A recent report from the Pew Research Center indicates that more Asian immigrants than Hispanic immigrants have come into the U.S. every year since 2010 (López et al., 2018). Considering the rapid growth of the immigrant

population, it is critical to understand whether immigrants have different perceptions of the police from native-born individuals and how those perceptions are different. Positive perceptions of the police have been shown to be instrumental in securing compliance and cooperation from citizens (Mazerolle, Bennett, Davis, Sargeant, & Manning, 2013; President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015), which can ultimately influence the quality of police performance (Tyler, Goff, & MacCoun, 2015). As Skogan (2005) noted, "positive views of the police make the work of the police easier and more effective" (p. 317).

Expanding our understanding of immigrant/police relations is particularly important within the context of the changes in immigration enforcement (Meissner, Kerwin, Chishti, & Bergeron, 2013; Treyger, Chalfin, & Loeffler, 2014). While the responsibility for the control of immigration has been placed under the authority of the federal government historically, state and local police departments have also been involved in immigration enforcement in recent years. For example, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) revised the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 so that state and local law enforcement agents can take part in immigration regulation (Theodore & Habans, 2016). IIRIRA also enabled state and local law enforcement agents to engage in immigration enforcement (i.e., Section 287(g) program). The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) indicates that 1,514 state and local law enforcement officers from 20 states have been trained and certified to enforce immigration laws (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 2018).

The current article assesses the extent to which there is a disparity in perceptions of the police across immigration generations as well as native-born Americans focusing on one of the most controversial government power in democracies, police use of force (Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993; Zimring, 2017). This paper proposes that there are several reasons it is likely that support

for police use of force varies between different generations of immigration as well as native-born Americans. The following section reviews conflicting findings regarding immigrants' perceptions of the police from the existing thin literature and highlights various propositions that can link immigrants to their perceptions of police authorities.

Immigrants, Native-born individuals, and Perceptions of the Police

Scholars have formulated different hypotheses regarding immigrants' perceptions of the police compared with the native-born. Some researchers have argued that immigrants would exhibit negative perceptions of the police compared with native-born persons (McCluskey, McCluskey, & Enriquez, 2008; Skogan, Steiner, Dubois, Gudell, & Fagan, 2002). There are at least three possible explanations to support the negative relationship between immigrants and perceptions of the police. First, immigrants' negative perceptions of the police in their home society could be imported into the U.S. When immigrants come to the host country, they bring their primary understanding of the police based on their home country (Pogrebin & Poole, 1990; Suárez-Orozco, 1990; Wu et al., 2017). Considering that many first-generation immigrants come from countries with bad governments or corrupt criminal justice systems (Brown, Benedict, & Wilkinson, 2006), immigrants may evaluate their views of the police negatively in light of their host society's standards. Second, immigrants often face significant barriers regarding language and cultural barriers (Herbst & Walker, 2001; Mendoza & Martínez, 1981), which can increase fear of police due to possible miscommunication in combination with a fear of deportation.

Research shows that immigrants feel vulnerable about the risk of deportation regardless of the legality of their entry (Sayad, 2004). The cultural and social barriers in addition to a fear of deportation may lead immigrants to be skeptical about the potential interaction with the police. Third, since the majority of immigrants are authorized immigrants (López et al., 2018), most

immigrants had to deal with immigration officials or border patrol officers to come to the U.S. and to stay. The aggressive stance regarding immigration policy in the U.S. could have negatively influenced immigrants' impression about the law enforcement system which can influence their perceptions toward local and state police (Wu et al., 2017).

On the other hand, other researchers have proposed the positive relationship between immigrants and their perceptions of the police. Three explanations are worth noting. First, negative perceptions of the police back home can set a low standard expectation regarding the police, and it can lead foreign-born immigrants to hold American police in high regard by comparing them to their police in their home countries (Correia, 2010; Menjívar & Bejarano, 2004; Weitzer, 2014). Second, some scholars argue that the lack of understanding of the U.S. society can operate favorably when it comes to immigrants' perceptions of the police. As immigrants become more assimilated into the host society, they may find more problems involving American legal institutions (Michelson, 2003). The increased familiarity with the mainstream American culture can erode positive perceptions of the police as immigrants develop the views of the police that are similar to native groups (Rengifo & Fratello, 2015).

Finally, research investigating an immigration/crime relationship has shown that immigrants tend to possess a host of protective factors that regulate their behaviors, such as strong informal social controls enforced by their neighbors and parents, the abundance of social capital and social networks, and positive ethnic identity and cultural norms (Desmond & Kubrin, 2009; Sampson, 2008). These protective factors can promote positive attitudes toward the police because immigrants' symbolic beliefs and norms can be reflected on their understanding of the police that represent the government institution according to the expressive model of perceptions of the police (Sun, Jou, Hou, & Chang, 2014). Also, considering that immigrants are a self-

selected group who is motivated to do better in the new society (Kirk, Papachristos, Fagan, & Tyler, 2012), they may recognize, value and honor American police because they represent the host society (Piquero et al., 2016)

Given these conflicting explanations that connect immigrants to perceptions of the police (Sun & Wu, 2018), there are three possible relationships. First, immigrants' perceptions of the police can be lower than the native-born because dampening effects of some processes (e.g., the imported views of the police in their home society) are stronger than counteracting processes. Conversely, immigrants may display positive views of the police since the mechanisms that function favorably toward the police prevail (e.g., contrasting the police back home with American police). Finally, two conflicting mechanisms can cancel each other out, which make immigrants exhibit similar levels of perceptions of the police to native-born individuals (Röder & Mühlau, 2012).

The present paper finds that the results from the small body of research that has compared the views of the police among immigrants with the native-born have yielded inconsistent conclusions. For example, some studies find that immigrants have more positive perceptions of the police than non-immigrants (Correia, 2010; Davis & Hendricks, 2007; Rengifo & Fratello, 2015). Wu (2014) found that native-born respondents were more likely to perceive police bias compared to foreign-born respondents. Some international studies conducted in Europe and Canada also support that evaluations of the police are more positive among immigrants compared with their native counterparts (Röder & Mühlau, 2012; Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2009). Other studies report that foreign-born immigrants exhibit more negative views toward the police than their native-born peers (Davis & Mateu-Gelabert, 2000; McCluskey et al.,

2008; Wu, Sun, & Smith, 2011). Still, others fail to find significant differences between immigrants and native-born persons (Skogan et al., 2002).

These and other related studies have helped document the interrelationship between immigrants, assimilation and how they relate to perceptions of the police. For instance, some researchers have used English proficiency and length of stay in the United States as rough proxies of immigrants' levels of assimilation into the destination country (Chu & Song, 2015; Correia, 2010; Michelson, 2003; Wu et al., 2011). However, the findings using these indicators of assimilation have been equivocal, providing limited evidence to conclude the direction of the effect of acculturation on perceptions of the police. Also, several limiting features of their data and measurement prohibit more conclusive answers regarding the relationship between acculturation and perceptions of the police. For example, the majority of studies examining perceptions of the police tend to use data collected from particular immigrants (e.g., Chinese immigrants or Hispanic immigrants) (Correia, 2010; Wu et al., 2011), and much of their data are either based on a particular city or non-probability sampling, which reduces the power of generalization (Chu & Song, 2015; McCluskey et al., 2008).

Immigrant Generation Status and Perceptions of the Police

Some researchers have noted that it is critical to disaggregate immigrants by their generational status because there are intergenerational disparities between the first-generation and second-generation in offending patterns and socialization processes (Bersani, 2014; Camarota & Vaughan, 2009; Gans, 1992). Research examining the crime immigration nexus has accumulated evidence that second-generation immigrants are more likely to show problem behaviors and engage in serious and persistent offending in comparison to their first-generation counterparts although their levels of crime are not necessarily higher than native-born individuals

(e.g., Bersani, Loughran, & Piquero, 2014; Portes & Zhou, 1993). What remains unclear is whether there exists a resemblance between second-generation immigrants and the native-born regarding their sentiments toward the police while there are disparities between first-generation immigrants and the others.

While first-generation immigrants have a bifocal lens to view and translate their current experiences based on their home countries as reference points to judge social institutions, including the police (Menjívar & Bejarano, 2004), second-generation immigrants use American mainstream culture as their points of reference to evaluate the police (Michelson, 2003). In discussions of the potential differences in perceptions of the police by nativity, Weitzer (2014) noted that “[foreign-born] immigrants have a dual frame of reference and draw distinctions between police in the two countries” (p. 2002). However, even if second-generation immigrants are ingrained in American mainstream culture, their views of the police can be different from native-born counterparts. Based on in-depth interviews with Afro-Caribbean youths, Solis, Portillos, and Brunson (2009) discovered that Afro-Caribbean residents were often subject to a form of profiling associated with their immigration status even when they are citizens, which consequently affected their perceptions of the police.

Some prior empirical work illuminates the possible disparities in perceptions of the police between first-generation individuals and successive generations. For example, Piquero et al. (2016), using data from the Pathways to Desistance, found that compared to the first-generation group, the second-generation and native-born groups tend to exhibit a lower belief in legitimacy, which was measured with multiple items that capture respondents’ perceptions of the police (e.g., “I have a great deal of respect for the police” or “overall, the police are honest”). Drawing on data pooled from a series of the European Social Survey, Röder and Mühlau (2012) compared

the levels of trust in the police among first- and second-generation immigrant groups. Their findings revealed that there were significant differences between first- and second-generation immigrants regarding trust in the police with the first-generation group displaying more trust than the second-generation group. This pattern was found from a study building on data from Canada. Wortley and Owusu-Bempah (2009) found that Canadian-born racial minorities evaluated police more negatively and perceived more police bias, on average, than the first-generation immigrants. A recent study conducted by Rengifo and Fratello (2015) also revealed that the relationship between first-generation immigration status and perceptions of the police was positive among young individuals aged 18-25 in New York City.

However, whether there is a difference in perceptions of the police between first-generation immigrants and second-generation immigrants and how they are different is not conclusive. Some researchers found evidence suggesting first-generation immigrants have more negative than positive attitudes toward the police compared with second-generation immigrants. Based on a nationally representative sample of 2,015 Latino respondents, Lopez and Livingston (2009) found that native-born Latinos had more overall confidence in the police compared with foreign-born Latinos. Specifically, half of the native-born Latino respondents expressed a great deal or a fair amount of confidence that police will avoid using excessive force on suspects, while 42% of foreign-born Latino respondents report the same level of confidence. A higher proportion of native-born Latinos (51%) were confident that the police would treat Hispanics fairly compared to first-generation Latinos (40%). Using what language is spoken at home as a proxy of native- or foreign-born status, some researchers endeavored to compare differences in perceptions of the police between foreign-born immigrants and native-born peers. Based on data from Chicago, Skogan et al. (2002) discovered that Spanish-speaking Latinos do not have

substantially different views toward the police in comparison to English-speaking Latinos (cf. McCluskey et al., 2008).

The Current Study

The current research builds on and extends the existing literature aimed at understanding the relationship between immigration and perceptions of the police by examining immigrant generational differences in perceptions of the police. A simple yet critical question is formulated after reviewing prior empirical work: do immigrants perceive American police differently from their native-born counterparts, especially regarding how the police use their force? While previous studies have addressed related questions, most studies fail to consider the differences between first-generation immigrants, second-generation immigrants, and native-born persons at the same time (Correia, 2010; McCluskey et al., 2008). Additionally, many of their findings are often based on data from immigrants living in a few geographic locations (Piquero et al., 2016; Skogan et al., 2002). To address the question of whether immigrants differently perceive the police, the current research compares three perceptions of the police (i.e., global support for police use of force, support for reasonable force, and support for excessive force) between first-generation immigrants, second-generation immigrants and native-born individuals.

Methodology

Data

The current research uses data collected by the General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS is administered by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) to a nationally representative sample of the noninstitutionalized U.S. population (ages 18 years and older). Specifically, the NORC collects data using a stratified, multistage area probability sampling of households in the United States. Since not all survey questions are administered to all respondents each year, the

current research draws on the 2012 GSS data that contains information regarding respondents' immigration status, interaction with the police, and perceptions of the police. The analysis assesses whether the extent of support for police use of force differs across immigrant generations as well as native-born individuals. The sample used for this study consisted of 1,148 respondents.

Measures

Dependent variables.

Considering that the public's general perceptions of the police can be different from specific attitudes toward the police (Brandl, Frank, Worden, & Bynum, 1994; Kaminski & Jefferis, 1998; Maguire, Lowrey, & Johnson, 2017), three types of support for police use of force were used as dependent variables. Following Silver and Pickett (2015), global support for the use of force was operationalized with a single item that asked: "Are there any situations you can imagine in which you would approve of a policeman striking an adult male citizen?" The response options for each item were 0 (no) and 1 (yes). The other two types of support for police use of force involve applying the use of force in specific situations (Barkan & Cohn, 1998; Silver & Pickett, 2015). Support for police use of reasonable force was measured with the two items asking, "Would you approve of a policeman striking a citizen who was attempting to escape from custody?" and "Would you approve of a policeman striking a citizen who was attacking the policeman with his fists?" (Barkan & Cohn, 1998). Reliability test results showed a relatively low measure of internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .65$). However, Cronbach's α is sensitive to the number of items, and a low number of items tends to yield lower reliability. Briggs and Cheek (1986) suggested that a mean inter-item correlation above .2 should be considered reliable. The mean inter-item correlation of support for reasonable force was .50. Support for the reasonable force was dichotomized so that respondents who responded "yes" to

either or both items were coded as 1 and respondents who answered “no” to both of the two items were coded as 0. Support for excessive police use of force was measured with the two items asking respondents whether they approve of a police officer striking “a citizen who had said vulgar and obscene things to the policeman” or “a citizen who was being questioned as a suspect in a murder case.” Reliability test results indicated a low measure of internal consistency (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .42$), but the mean inter-item correlation was above the widely accepted standard ($r = .27$; Briggs & Cheek, 1986). Support for excessive force was also dichotomized so that respondents who answered “yes” to either or both items were coded as 1 and respondents who answered “no” to both of the two items were coded as 0 (See Table 1).

Given that prior empirical work has presented evidence that predictors are differentially related to support for different types of force, it is critical to distinguish measures for reasonable and excessive force (Barkan & Cohn, 1998; Cullen et al., 1996; Silver & Pickett, 2015). Additionally, the primary role of the police has been defined as “a mechanism for the distribution of non-negotiably coercive force employed in accordance with the dictates of an intuitive grasp of situational exigencies” (Bittner, 1990, p. 131). In other words, the use of reasonable force is an essential component of police work when necessary (Tennessee v. Garner, 471 U.S. 1105, 1985). However, if the police use of force exceeds what is deemed reasonably necessary to fulfill their lawful purpose, it is considered as excessive force and is unethical (Pollock, 2017).

Independent variable.

Following the convention in the immigration literature (Pew Research Center, 2013; Piquero et al., 2016), the current paper uses the information on the country of birth of the respondents and their parents to differentiate first-generation immigrants from second-generation immigrants. The 2012 GSS data contained questions asking the place of birth of the respondent

and his or her parents (e.g., “Were you born in this country?” and “Were both your parents born in this country?”). Those who knew where they were born from and where their parents were born from were included in the study. First-generation immigrants include those individuals born outside the U.S. with foreign-born parents ($n = 250$; 12.9% of the total sample), while second-generation immigrants include those individuals born in the U.S. with at least one foreign-born parent ($n = 203$, 10.4% of the total sample). The first-generation group was used as a reference category in this study. Native-born individuals represent those individuals born in the U.S. with both native-born parents. Unfortunately, the ancestry of these immigrants was not investigated in the 2012 GSS, but given that the GSS is a nationally representative sample, the composition of the ancestry is expected to reflect the nation’s immigrant population (see also, López et al., 2018).

Control variable.

Along with the immigration generation status variable, the following controls are included in our analysis: race, gender, age, education, family income, marital status, city residence, southern residential status, and arrest experience based on previous research on perceptions of the police (e.g., Barkan & Cohn, 1998; Brown & Benedict, 2002; Choi, 2018; Johnson & Kuhns, 2009; Silver & Pickett, 2015). Race was a dummy variable, coded 1 for non-white, 0 for white. Gender was a nominal variable. In the immigrant subsample, 46.4% are male, which corresponds with the composition of the full sample (44.8%). Age was treated as a linear variable, ranging from 18 to 89. Education was measured as a continuous variable involving how many years of schooling individual had completed (range 0 – 20). Respondents’ family income was measured as an ordinal variable ranging from 1 (lowest income level) to 25 (highest income level). To improve the distribution of negatively skewed values, the family income variable was

transformed by taking the natural log. Marital status was recoded such that married = 1 and not married = 0. City residence was coded such that those who resided in a city with a population of 50,000 or greater = 1 and those who did not = 0. Residence in the South was also included in the model based on the previous findings that individuals living in the South may have higher approval for police use of force compared to their non-South counterparts (Carter, Corra, & Jenks, 2016; Silver & Pickett, 2015). Southern residence was a dummy variable created by using an item regarding the region of the interview. Based on the regional definitions adopted by the U.S. Census, those who were from West South Central, East South Central, and South Atlantic were coded 1, whereas residents from elsewhere were coded as 0. Past research revealed that prior interaction with the police could significantly change perceptions of the police (Tyler & Huo, 2002), especially when it comes to police-initiated contact (Bradford, Jackson, & Stanko, 2009; Skogan, 2006). The item measures whether the subject has ever been picked up, or charged, by the police for any reason whether or not they were guilty (0 = no; 1: yes). Additionally, two symbolic beliefs were included in the statistical models: religious fundamentalism and retributiveness. Both variables have been included in research examining factors predicting support for police use of force (Silver & Pickett, 2015). Based on Smith's (1990) categorization, religious fundamentalism was dichotomized (fundamentalist = 1 and nonfundamentalist = 0). Retributiveness was measured using a dummy variable with a variable coded 1 if the respondent supported the death penalty and coded 0 otherwise.

[Table 1 about here]

Results

Table 2 presents the results from multivariate logistic regression models predicting each of the three binary dependent variables (i.e., global support for the use of force, support for

reasonable force, support for excessive force) while considering immigrant generation status. More specifically, our analyses assessed whether significant differences exist in support for police use of force across immigrant generations and native-born individuals after controlling for various individual characteristics and symbolic beliefs.

The results indicated that there were significant differences in support for police use of force among native-born individuals as opposed to among the first-generation group. Specifically, the native-born group indicated, on average, higher levels of global support and support for reasonable force in comparison to the first-generation group. However, native-born individuals were less likely to support excessive use of force by police compared to the first-generation group. Interestingly, no significant effect was found when comparing the second-generation and native-born groups in terms of global support and support for reasonable force. Nonetheless, first-generation immigrants exhibited higher support for excessive force compared to the second-generation group.

Additionally, the results revealed that on average, non-whites were less likely to exhibit global support for police use of force and support for reasonable force compared to whites. Males were more likely to exhibit higher global support than females. Education was significantly and positively associated with global support for police use of force, but not with situational support for police use of force. Those with higher family income were more supportive of police use of force in general as opposed to their counterparts. Retributiveness exerted a significant effect on support for excessive force. Those who support the death penalty were more likely to support police use of excessive force.

[Table 2 about here]

Discussion

Policing researchers have proposed different explanations to predict immigrants' perceptions of the police (Menjívar & Bejarano, 2004; Weitzer, 2014; Wu et al., 2017). However, the validity of myriad models linking immigrants to their perceptions of the police has remained uncertain partly because most studies did not consider different generations of immigrants when investigating immigrants' perceptions of the police. Additionally, much of previous research tends to draw on data from immigrants with certain nativity (e.g., Mexicans) in limited geographic locations that prohibit the generalization of the findings (McCluskey et al., 2008; Skogan et al., 2002). The current research addresses a noticeable gap in this line of work by using a nationally representative sample and by examining the relationship between immigrant generation status and three types of support for police use of force. Specifically, this paper examined the extent to which significant differences exist in support for police use of force across successive immigrant generations and native-born individuals. Our research, estimated by multivariate logistic regression models, yielded three important findings.

First, first-generation immigrants reported, on average, less global support for police use of force than the native-born group. This finding may reflect the argument that first-generation immigrants bring their negative perceptions of the police in their home country into the destination society (Suárez-Orozco, 1990). It is also possible that first-generation immigrants are less supportive of law enforcement in general due to recent aggressive immigration policy (Rocha et al., 2015). The expansion of immigration enforcement and greater collaboration between federal immigration agents and state and local police departments may have led first-generation immigrants to feel vulnerable about their immigration status (Sayad, 2004; Theodore & Habans, 2016), leading them to be skeptical about police use of force. However, there was no significant difference between the first-generation and second-generation groups in terms of

global support. It may suggest that perceptions of the police among second-generation immigrants are influenced by the social influence of significant others including their parents.

Second, first-generation immigrants were significantly less supportive of police use of reasonable force compared to the native-born group. Importantly, the second-generation group did not exhibit a significantly different view regarding reasonable force compared with the native-born group. Again, it is possible that the second-generation group would have been influenced by their first-generation immigrant parents regarding perceptions of the police. If the first-generation group has developed cynical views toward police work through their experiences with frustrating immigration process (Wu et al., 2017), their children can also foster negative views toward the police. In short, different socialization processes can account for the differences in support for the reasonable force between the native-born group and the second-generation group.

Third, as opposed to global support for police use of force and support for reasonable force, the first-generation was more supportive of excessive use of force when compared to the two American-born groups. This finding indicates that immigrant generation status is particularly relevant in understanding support for excessive force. It is notable that there was a significant difference in support for excessive use of force by police between first-generation and second-generation immigrants unlike support for other types of force. On the surface, different patterns of support for police use of force may seem hard to explain. However, provided that the majority of the first-generation immigrants come from home cultures that highly honor authorities—either governmental or legal authorities, such as Asian Confucian culture or Latin American culture, they may be more tolerant of police excessive use of force when police officers are verbally disrespected. Speaking vulgar or obscene things to the policeman—a representative of legal

authority—can be considered a violation of the cultural norm. Regarding murder cases, which are universally perceived as the severest form of violent crime across most cultures, first-generation immigrants may feel that police use of excessive force is a justifiable response because they value social order and they perceive that the police are responsible for restoring order by solving extreme crimes.

The findings of this study complement recent discussions about immigrants' perceptions of police (Weitzer, 2014; Wu et al., 2017) by showing that first-generation immigrants have a distinctive attitude toward police use of force from second-generation immigrants and native-born individuals. Notably, the current findings emerged among a nationally representative U.S. population, and as a result, the observations from this study can have stronger external validity than the findings from limited geographic regions. The current findings suggest that criminal justice agents should recognize that first-generation immigrants can have different views toward their use of force from American-born individuals and that the police may need to design specific police tactics and programs to improve the first-generation group's perceptions of the police.

Although the current research is among the first analysis to examine the extent to which there exist differences in support for police use of force between first-generation, second-generation, and native-born individuals, the current study suggests more avenues for continued research on differences in perceptions of the police between immigrants and native-born individuals. First, this study could not include information regarding immigrants' ancestry due to limited data. As noted by Sun and Wu (2018), it is risky “to identify and summarize general patterns of attitudes and relationships that can apply to different immigrant groups in this country at the present time, knowing that the variations among and within these groups are considerable”

(p. 164). Aggregating the immigrant population can gloss over significant differences along the axis of national origin (Weitzer, 2014). Disaggregating immigrants according to their national origins can prevent future research from eclipsing differences between immigrants.

Second, while a strength of the current research lies in its strong external validity, our findings should be examined with different populations other than a community sample. Since the GSS uses a noninstitutionalized U.S. population, it is not clear whether the current findings can be replicated from a sample of offenders. For example, using longitudinal data, Piquero et al. (2016) revealed that first-generation immigrants had a higher belief in legitimacy compared with the second-generation and native-born groups. Though their study did not directly examine support for police use of force, their findings are not congruent with our findings that the first-generation group was less supportive of police use of force in general. Additional findings from different samples can ensure the direction of the relationship between immigrant generation status and perceptions of the police.

Considering the importance of immigrants' perceptions of the police in terms of their willingness to report crimes and their cooperation with the police (Kirk et al., 2012; President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015), further research regarding differences in perceptions of the police between first-generation, second-generation, and native-born individuals remains a high priority.

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Table 1

Study Sample Descriptive Statistics

Variable	M or %	SD	Minimum	Maximum
<i>Dependent Variables</i>				
Global support	68.80%	—	0	1
Support for reasonable force	89.98%	—	0	1
Support for excessive force	19.78%	—	0	1
<i>Immigration Generation Status</i>				
First-generation	12.9%	—	0	1
Second-generation	10.3%	—	0	1
Native-born	76.7%	—	0	1
<i>Individual Characteristics</i>				
Race (nonwhite = 1)	25.18%	—	0	1
Sex (male = 1)	44.8%	—	0	1
Age	48.19	17.69	18	89
Education	13.53	3.13	0	20
Family income (logged)	2.79	0.48	.69	3.26
Marital status (married = 1)	46.59%	—	0	1
City Residence (city = 1)	83.74%	—	0	1
South (South = 1)	37.59%	—	0	1
Arrest (Arrest = 1)	21.34%	—	0	1
<i>Symbolic Beliefs</i>				
Religious fundamentalism	26.32%	—	0	1
Retributiveness	64.86%	—	0	1

Abbreviation: M = Mean, SD = standard deviation

Table 2

Logistic Regression Model Predicting Support for Police Use of Force by Immigrant Generation Status (N = 1148)

	Model 1 (Global support)		Model 2 (Support for reasonable force)		Model 3 (Support for excessive force)	
	Odds Ratio	(SE)	Odds Ratio	(SE)	Odds Ratio	(SE)
2 nd Generation	1.644	(.332)	1.881	(.430)	0.370**	(.366)
Native	2.017**	(.244)	3.871***	(.301)	0.378***	(.245)
<i>Controls</i>						
Nonwhite	0.372*	(.190)	0.287***	(.270)	1.948***	(.208)
Male	1.769**	(.174)	1.424	(.266)	1.471*	(.183)
Age	1.005	(.005)	1.004	(.008)	0.997	(.005)
Education	1.227***	(.033)	1.024	(.042)	0.958	(.032)
Family income	1.992***	(.186)	1.753**	(.239)	0.705†	(.190)
Marital status	0.834	(.179)	0.739	(.277)	0.965	(.191)
City Residence	1.056	(.236)	0.631	(.444)	0.962	(.257)
South	1.182	(.177)	0.905	(.270)	1.166	(.188)
Arrest	0.887	(.206)	0.748	(.306)	0.755	(.231)
<i>Symbolic Beliefs</i>						
Fundamentalism	1.443†	(.206)	1.623	(.328)	1.292	(.212)
Retributiveness	1.127	(.176)	1.296	(.259)	2.076***	(.206)
2 nd gen = Native?	.795	(.268)	.491†	(.395)	.972	(.319)
Nagelkerke R ²	.241		.182		.102	

† $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests).